



NEWS

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Air District Offers \$500 Bounty for Old Vehicles

Bay Area owners of 1981 and older vehicles are set to receive letters inviting them to participate in the Air District's Vehicle Buy Back Program. The program buys 1981 and older cars and light duty trucks for \$500 and scraps them to help reduce air pollution. For each vehicle scrapped, 200 to 440 pounds of pollutants are removed from the air.

The Vehicle Buy Back program began purchasing and scrapping vehicles in 1996 and has earmarked almost \$4 million to buy approximately 7,000 vehicles. So far, the program has purchased over 5,000 vehicles. There are over 500,000 vehicles that are model year 1981 or older in the Bay Area.

"Older vehicles are targeted in this program because even well-maintained older vehicles have significantly higher air emissions than most newer models. Vehicles, especially 1973 and older, are exempt from the SMOG Check program, and can legally operate with emissions that are 5 to more than 50 times as much as new cars," stated Executive Officer Ellen Garvey.

Among the air pollutants reduced by scrapping old vehicles are reactive organic gases and oxides of nitrogen which combine in heat and sunlight to form ground-level ozone--the main ingredient in smog. Scrapping cars also removes airborne particulates. These pollutants are known to aggravate cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses and can contribute to increased cancer risk.

To qualify for the Vehicle Buy Back program, a vehicle must be in operating condition and have been registered in the nine Bay Area counties for the past two years. To find out if a car qualifies, call the Air District's information hotline at **1-888-690-CASH**.